

We claim:

1. An apparatus comprising  
a bite block, and  
first and second gripping jaws carried by the bite  
block, the jaws capable of selectively moving between an  
open spaced-apart position and a closed-adjacently spaced  
position.

2. An apparatus as in claim 1  
wherein the jaws possess a resilient plastic memory.

3. An apparatus as in claim 2  
wherein the resilient memory plastic memory biases  
the jaws toward the closed position.

4. An apparatus as in claim 2  
wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the jaws  
toward the open position.

5. An apparatus as in claim 1  
wherein the jaws are positioned, in the closed  
position, to hold an external instrument.

6. An apparatus as in claim 1  
wherein the jaws are positioned, in the open  
position, to permit removal, insertion, or alteration of  
the position of an external instrument.

7. An apparatus as in claim 1  
wherein the jaws are selectively removable from the  
bite block.

8. An apparatus as in claim 1  
wherein the jaws are integral with the bite block.

9. An apparatus comprising  
a bite block,  
first and second gripping jaws carried by the bite  
block, and

an actuator mechanism capable of selectively moving  
the jaws between an open spaced-apart position and a  
closed adjacently-spaced position.

10. An apparatus as in claim 9

wherein the actuator mechanism comprises a cam surface.

11. An apparatus as in claim 9

wherein the actuator mechanism comprises a cam mechanism.

12. An apparatus as in claim 9

wherein the actuator mechanism comprises a squeeze clamp.

13. An apparatus as in claim 9

wherein at least one of the jaws and the actuator mechanism possess a resilient plastic memory.

14. An apparatus as in claim 13

wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the jaws toward the closed position.

15. An apparatus as in claim 13

wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the jaws toward the open position.

16. An apparatus as in claim 9

wherein the jaws are positioned, in the closed position, to hold an external instrument.

17. An apparatus as in claim 9

wherein the jaws are positioned, in the open position, to permit removal, insertion, or alteration of the position of an external instrument.

18. An apparatus as in claim 9

wherein at least one of the jaws and the actuator mechanism are selectively removable from the bite block.

19. An apparatus as in claim 9

wherein the at least one of the jaws and the actuator mechanism are integral with the bite block.

20. A gripping apparatus for association with a bite block comprising

first and second gripping jaws carried by the bite block, the jaws capable of selectively moving between an open, spaced-apart position and a closed, adjacently-

spaced position.

21. An apparatus as in claim 20

wherein the jaws possess a resilient plastic memory.

22. An apparatus as in claim 21

wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the jaws toward the closed position.

23. An apparatus as in claim 21

wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the jaws toward the open position.

24. An apparatus as in claim 20

wherein the jaws are positioned, in the closed position, to hold an external instrument.

25. An apparatus as in claim 20

wherein the jaws are positioned, in the open position, to permit removal, insertion, or alteration of the position of an external instrument.

26. An apparatus as in claim 20

wherein the jaws are selectively removable from the bite block.

27. An apparatus as in claim 20

wherein the jaws are integral with the bite block.

28. A gripping apparatus for association with a

bite block comprising

first and second gripping jaws carried by the bite block, and

an actuator mechanism capable of selectively moving the jaws between an open, spaced-apart position and a closed, adjacently-spaced position.

29. An apparatus as in claim 28

wherein the actuator mechanism comprises a cam surface.

30. An apparatus as in claim 28

wherein the actuator mechanism comprises a cam mechanism.

31. An apparatus as in claim 28

wherein the actuator mechanism comprises a squeeze clamp.

32. An apparatus as in claim 28

wherein at least one of the jaws and the actuator mechanism possess a resilient plastic memory.

33. An apparatus as in claim 32

wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the jaws toward the closed position.

34. An apparatus as in claim 32

wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the jaws toward the open position.

35. An apparatus as in claim 28

wherein the jaws are positioned, in the closed position, to hold an external instrument.

36. An apparatus as in claim 28

wherein the jaws are positioned, in the open position, to permit removal, insertion, or alteration of the position of an external instrument.

37. An apparatus as in claim 28

wherein at least one of the jaws and the actuator mechanism are selectively removable from the bite block.

38. An apparatus as in claim 28

wherein the at least one of the jaws and the actuator mechanism are integral with the bite block.

39. A gripping tool for association with a bite block comprising

an element selectively movable between an open condition accommodating passage of an external instrument through the bite block and a closed condition gripping an exterior instrument in the bite block.

40. A tool as in claim 39

wherein the tool is selectively removable from the bite block.

41. A tool as in claim 39

wherein the tool is integral with the bite block.

42. A tool as in claim 39  
wherein the element includes a resilient plastic  
memory.

43. A tool as in claim 42  
wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the  
element toward the open position.

44. A tool as in claim 42  
wherein the resilient plastic memory biases the  
element toward the closed position.

45. A method of utilizing a bite block  
incorporating a gripping tool comprising

first and second gripping jaws carried by the bite  
block, and

5 an actuator mechanism capable of selectively moving  
the jaws between an open, spaced-apart position and a  
closed, adjacently-spaced position

comprising the steps of

10 inserting the bite block into an individual's mouth,

moving the jaws to the open position,

inserting an external instrument,

positioning the external instrument as desired,

moving the jaws to the closed position,

performing a desired procedure,

15 moving the jaws to the open position,

removing the external instrument, and

removing the bite block from the individual's mouth.

46. A method of utilizing a bite block  
incorporating a gripping tool comprising

first and second gripping jaws carried by the bite  
block, and

5 an actuator mechanism capable of selectively moving  
the jaws between an open spaced-apart position and a  
closed adjacently-spaced position

comprising the steps of

inserting the bite block into an individual's mouth,

10 moving the jaws to the open position,  
inserting an external instrument,  
positioning the external instrument as desired,  
moving the jaws to the closed position,  
performing a desired procedure,  
15 moving the jaws to the open position,  
altering the position of the external instrument,  
moving the jaws to the closed position,  
performing another desired procedure,  
moving the jaws to the open position,  
20 removing the external instrument, and  
removing the bite block from the individual's mouth.

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